

CF516 BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

AN INTRODUCTION TO THEOLOGY

THE DEFINITION OF THEOLOGY

The word "theology" comes from two Greek words, *theos* meaning "God" and *logos* meaning "the word about" or "the study of" God as He is revealed in the Scriptures. Simply defined, theology is an in-depth study of the Holy Bible to discover what God has said about Himself, His purposes, His plans, and His promises.

THE SUBJECTS OF THEOLOGY

The major subjects of theology includes the study of:

- Paterology: The study of God, the Father.
- Christology: The study of the Son, Jesus Christ.
- Pneumatology: The study of the Holy Spirit.
- Angelology: The study of angels.
- Demonology: The study of Satan and demons.
- Bibliology: The study of the Holy Bible, which is the revelation of God.
- Harmartiology: The study of sin.
- Soteriology: The study of salvation which is God's provision for sin.
- Ecclesiology: The study of the Church.
- Eschatology: The study of biblical prophecy, the end-times, and eternity.

These words are not used in the Bible, but are terms used by scholars to describe the major subjects of theology. Entire volumes have been written on each of these subjects--a book could easily be written on each topic. The purpose of this study, however, is to provide a summary for independent learning and/or teaching of basic theological concepts. It uses the Scriptures as the primary resource, and does not deal with conflicting theological arguments.

THE CENTRAL THEME

The Bible reveals the mystery of God's plan which is the unifying theme of the Bible. It is the revelation of Jesus Christ as the Savior of sinful mankind. Jesus explained how the Old Testament centered on Him:

"And He said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning me" (Luke 24:44). With this introduction, Jesus

continued and "...opened He their understanding that they might understand the scriptures" (Luke 24:45). What was the key Jesus gave them to understanding the Scriptures? The fact that its major theme focused on Him: "...Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And Ye are witnesses of these things" (Luke 24:46-48).

The Old and New Testaments both tell the story of Jesus. The Old Testament prepares us for His coming and the New Testament tells how it happened. This unites the entire Bible and the study of Biblical theology in one major theme: Jesus Christ.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THEOLOGY

There are several important reasons for studying and understanding the major teachings of Scripture.

-Theology is important for personal spiritual growth and development so that you may "...grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). Growth takes time in the natural world as well as the spiritual world. Some theological truths can only be understood over a period of time. For example, if you are a new believer, you may not understand the faithfulness of God as well as someone who has served the Lord for years.

- Theology is important in order to avoid doctrinal error. The first sin resulted from the enemy questioning "Has God said?" (Genesis 3:1). If you do not know what God has said in His Word regarding foundational issues of faith, then you may fall into doctrinal error and--ultimately--into sin.
- Theology is vital in order to be able to explain Biblical truths to unbelievers and be prepared to give an answer for the hope which is within you (1 Peter 3:15).
- Theology is essential for your spiritual walk and ministry. As in all Bible study, you should seek heart knowledge--not just head knowledge--through application of what you learn. The purpose of revelation is not just to obtain information, but to allow revelation to result in application to and transformation of your life.

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

You may choose to study or teach the entire course on Biblical Theology or you can select individual topics and focus on a single subject. To receive the full benefits of this study:

Theology must be approached with a spiritual mind because "...the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:14). A spiritual mind is one that has been transformed by the new birth experience and is immersed in and consumed

by a passion for God and His Word.